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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Colombia

DATE DISTR. 31 Jan 1949

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SUBJECT Plans for Reorganization of Communist Party of

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- 1. In anticipation of the lifting of the state of siege in Colombia, the Secretariat of the Communist Party of Colombia made plans for the reorganization of the Party without, however, being able to agree on the form the new organization will follow.
- 2. Gilberto Vieira White favors a return to the former system, whereby committees would be established named after well-known Communists. Attendance at meetings of these committees would be limited to Party members, and new members would be admitted only after careful checking.
- 3. Other members of the Central Executive Committee, particularly Jaime Barrios, Secretary of Organization, and Filiberto Barrero, Secretary of Agitation, are in favor of a system similar to that in use in Cuba, whereby an office open to the public would be established in each barrio. These offices would furnish information to those desiring it and would accept applications for membership as well as collect contributions from sympathizers.
- 4. It was argued that the latter system, while favoring the rapid growth of the Party, would allow the Government and the clergy an opportunity to penetrate Communist activities under the guise of applicants or sympathizers. The committees, on the other hand, would operate more or less secretly, and the activities of the members could be more carefully watched. It is believed that the system finally adopted may be a compromise under which public offices would be established only in the principal cities of the country. The main work of the Party will be conducted through secret committees in the barrios, and farm agitation will be conducted with the utmost discretion in order not to encounter the open opposition of the clergy.
- 5. The current indecision regarding the organization of the Party reflects the lack of discipline and the general feeling of pessimism in the Party itself regarding the future of Communism in Colombia. In the opinion of Vieira White, the Party should be prepared for possible persecution by the Government, eventual illegality, and even the necessity of going underground.

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